# THE WORLD.

NUMBER CCIII.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

*To be continued every* THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *November* the 18th, 1756.

WHILST the generality of *moraliſts* maintain the utility of the paſſions, the generality of *men* complain of their inconveniency. For though ſpeculation can eaſily confine them to proper objects, reſtrain them within proper bounds, and make them aſſiſtant and ſubſervient to the greateſt purpoſes, experience finds them impatient of the rein, and we are hurried by them into every kind of extravagance. In like manner batchelors lay down incomparable rules for the government of a wife, which the huſband, whoſe province is οὐ γνῶσις ἀλλὰ πρᾶξις, not theory but practice, may find extremely defective in the day of trial. The truth is, that

that no ſchemes can be formed, no directions can be delivered for the conduct of the paſſions, without a previous knowledge of their nature, the various circumſtances that may excite them, and the ſtrength they exert in every individual. Speculation may in ſome meaſure prepare, but can never ſufficiently provide for practice. Thus a moraliſt may preſcribe patience in the caſe of pain; but if the anguiſh ariſe from an author's reading his own works, a patient ear, however uſeful in general, will ſerve only to aggravate the miſery, and perhaps render it inſupportable. And indeed ſuch means as theſe will always be found either uſeleſs or fatal; for they will either have no effect upon the paſſion, or totally deſtroy it. Let us try therefore to find an expedient which ſhall preſerve and nouriſh theſe elements of life, and at the ſame time prevent thoſe evils which are ſo juſtly apprehended, and ſo frequently felt from them.

ARISTOTLE has long ago obſerved that poetry is more philoſophical than hiſtory; and Horace has not ſcrupled to prefer Homer to the philoſophers themſelves, even in points of inſtruction; in which all ſenſible men muſt unanimouſly concur. For the paſſions being a poet's peculiar province, he muſt indiſputably be beſt acquainted with their nature, and beſt qualified to direct them. From the poets therefore we may expect information; and, if I am not much miſtaken, every tragic writer will furniſh us with the expedient we want. For there is ſcarce a ſingle tragedy in which the paſſions of the hero have not full play, and yet by the ſubſtitution of proper objects, are artfully diverted from the production of thoſe miſchiefs that uſually attend them. To inſtance in the tragedy of Fatal Conſtancy; the hero ſuſpecting the cruelty of his miſtreſs, or rather her obedience to her

her father, falls with the greateſt propriety into the paſſion of anger, which thus burſts forth,

" *Curs'd be the treacherous ſex, curs'd be the hour,*
" *Curs'd be the world, and every thing—but her!*

Upon ſuch a provocation as this, it was abſolutely impoſſible to have prevented the paſſion; the poet therefore gives it free indulgence; and to avert the fatal effects it might have upon the lady, as the immediate cauſe, or upon the more remote one her father, he ſuppoſes it employed in execrations againſt the ſex in general, the hour, the world, and in ſhort againſt every thing but his miſtreſs. Now this artifice may I think be very advantageouſly removed from the ſtage to the world, from fictitious to real perſons, as appears from the conduct of gameſters, who in an ill run, will with the greateſt vehemence curſe their fortune or their cards, and having vented their anger, will play on with the utmoſt compoſure and reſignation, and be perfectly agreeable to their adverſaries.

THE ancients make mention of one Philoxenus, a celebrated eater, who inſtead of making his rivals at the table the objects of his paſſion, envied cranes for their length of neck; the ſhort duration of pleaſure being the only defect of his enjoyments. Mr. Pope too takes notice of a reverend ſire,

*Who envy'd every ſparrow that he ſaw.*

I produce theſe inſtances merely to ſhew the poſſibility of an innocent exerciſe of the paſſions, which muſt be employed to prevent a ſtagnation in the mind, and by theſe means may be indulged without injury to others. Thus rural ſquires, who are pure followers of nature, to keep their dogs and themſelves in breath, trail herrings along the road, when the ſeaſon will not admit of real buſineſs.

BUT

BUT to remove all doubts concerning the poſſibility of this method, and at the ſame time to ſhew it's utility, I muſt introduce St. Auſtin to my readers. It is well known that the prevailing paſſion of this ſaint was love, and that an habitual indulgence had rendered it too formidable for a regular attack. He therefore engaged by ſtratagem, where his utmoſt ſtrength was ineffectual, and by forming a woman of ſnow for his embraces, ſecured his own character, and the honour of his fair diſciples, from thoſe devaſtations to which they muſt otherwiſe have been fatally expoſed.

AN example like this is, I think, ſufficient to confirm the principles, and recommend the practice of ſubſtituting objects for the exerciſe of the paſſions; but leſt difficulties ſhould ariſe from the choice, I ſhall point out ſuch as will beſt correſpond with ſome particular paſſions, that we may from thence be enabled to judge what will beſt ſuit with the reſt. To begin with what is moſt important and moſt prevailing, Love. Should a young lady find herſelf unfortunately expoſed to the unrulineſs of this paſſion, either by nature or education, by too cloſe an attention to the ſtudy of romance, or too ſtrong a confidence in the converſation of her friends, her condition muſt be very deplorable: for indulgence, the moſt obvious expedient, is prohibited by cuſtom; oppoſition would always be found ridiculous, often impracticable, and ſometimes fatal; and ſhould ſhe follow the example of poor Viola in Shakeſpear,

——————*who never told her love,*
*But let concealment, like a worm i'th' bud,*
*Feed on her damaſk cheek,*

her caſe muſt be deſperate indeed: for the deſtruction of her charms would infallibly deſtroy the very means of happineſs, and make her fit only for the incurables of

a convent, for which our proteſtant country has not yet thought proper to provide. Now all theſe inconveniencies will be removed by ſubſtituting ſome other object to engroſs her affection. Thus a lap-dog, a ſquirrel, or a parrot may relieve her diſtreſs, by being admitted to her boſom, and receiving thoſe *douceurs* and careſſes which her paſſion prompts her to beſtow upon her lover. It is certain that the celebrated Antonia eſcaped the fatal effects of this paſſion, and preſerved her character untainted amidſt the ſlanders and corruption of the worſt of courts, by fixing her affection upon a lamprey. In vain did the beaus of Rome offer up their vows; her tenderderneſs was devoted to her favourite fiſh, on which ſhe doted to that degree, that ſhe fondly adorned it with her choiceſt ear-rings.

But if this method ſhould not ſufficiently anſwer the great purpoſe of giving exerciſe to the paſſion, I cannot forbear the mention of one more, and that is cards. A *parti carrè* at Cribbage or Whiſt will give full ſcope to the reſtleſſneſs of it's nature, and enable the fair female to indulge it in all it's ſtages: for every deal will excite her affection or her anger; will inflame her jealouſy, or reſtore her eaſe; will give her all the pangs of diſappointment, or furniſh the ſilent tranſports of ſucceſs.

What has been hitherto propoſed is deſigned for the unmarried ladies; the ſituation and circumſtances of a wife, being in ſome reſpects different, may require a different treatment. If therefore what is here preſcribed prove ineffectual, ſhe may have recourſe to St. Auſtin's remedy, which is always at hand; for by fixing her affections upon her huſband, ſhe may convert a lump of ſnow into a lover, and have the ſaint's exquiſite pleaſure of a mortifying indulgence.